

# SUNCOAST OBSERVER

A quarterly newsletter brought to you by the National Weather Service Tampa Bay Area, FL

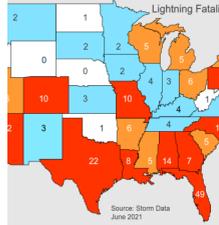
www.weather.gov/tampa

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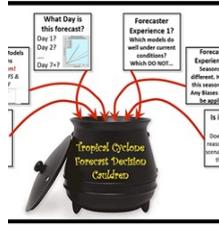
## Top stories in this newsletter



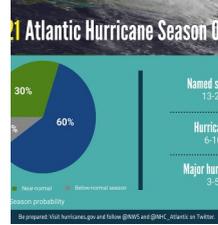
NWS Tampa Bay Participates in Hurricane Tabletop Exercise with Port Tampa Bay



Lightning Safety



Weather Workout Sessions Return



Hurricane Season Outlook and New Normals

## NWS Tampa Bay Participates in Hurricane Tabletop Exercise with Port Tampa Bay



By: Dustin Norman

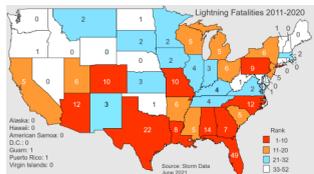
For the 9th year in a row, Port Tampa Bay, Florida's largest port, and the Tampa Bay Area's National Weather Service (NWS) office presented a hurricane tabletop exercise with the goal of sharpening the preparedness and response actions of port tenants along with local, state, and federal partners. This year's exercise was held virtually with 162 registrants across an extensive range of professions.

NWS Tampa Meteorologist-in-Charge Brian LaMarre started the day by providing a brief 2020 hurricane season overview and highlighted the collaborative partnership between the local NWS office and Port Tampa and area response officials since the first exercise in 2012. NWS Tampa meteorologist Dustin Norman, who also serves as the WFO Liaison to Port Tampa Bay, then presented about weather-related hazards impacting Port operations and the marine community.

In addition to an in-depth discussion about specific hurricane products, there was also a lively discussion about sea fog formation and forecasting strategies along with severe thunderstorm winds associated with squall lines, as these impacts can more frequently deliver significant impact Port operations.

The event wrapped up with several other fantastic panelists including members from the United States Coast Guard, Port Heavy Weather Advisory Group, NOAA's National Ocean Service, City of Tampa emergency management, and Hillsborough County emergency management. The local National Weather Service office in Ruskin, FL recognizes that it is an honor and privilege to be invited year after year to co-host a fundamental Weather Ready Nation initiative such as the Port Tampa Bay Hurricane Tabletop Exercise.

## Lightning Safety

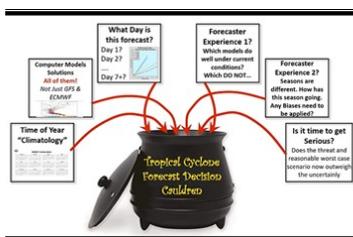


By: Dan Noah

Lightning is fascinating to watch, but also extremely dangerous. It kills or injures hundreds of people every year in the United States. It's important to understand the dangers associated with this weather phenomena and what you need to do to stay safe when thunderstorms threaten. There is no safe place outside when thunderstorms are in the area. If you hear thunder, you are likely within striking distance of the storm. Just remember, "When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!" Too many people wait far too long to get to a safe place when thunderstorms approach. Unfortunately, these delayed actions lead to many of the lightning deaths and injuries in the U.S.

In 2001, the United States averaged 55 deaths per year based on the previous 10 years. That average has now dropped to 25 deaths per year despite an increase of 16% in the U.S. population. The decrease in lightning deaths can be largely attributed to increased awareness of the dangers of lightning, better lightning safety policies and guidelines, and better medical attention for lightning victims. While these results are encouraging, at least 643 people died as a result of lightning strikes during the 20-year period from 2001 to 2020, and 2 more have been killed already this year by lightning. In most of these cases, the victims were only steps away from safety when they were struck. Unfortunately, they either failed to recognize the danger of a nearby thunderstorm or failed to respond quickly enough to that threat. Visit <http://lightningsafetycouncil.org/States/FL.pdf> to see a list of lightning fatalities in Florida from 2006-2020 and what they were doing when struck. Lightning safety tips and resources can be found at <https://weather.gov/safety/lightning>.

## Weather Workout Sessions Return

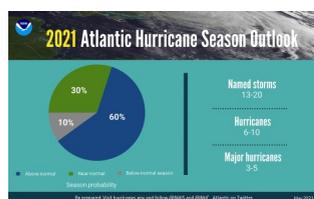


By: Tony Hurt

In lieu of our typical Integrated Warning Team Workshops due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Tampa Bay Area WFO hosted a series of online, virtual IWTs during February. These "Weather Workouts" were held each Tuesday of the month and included a variety of topics such as Fire Weather, El Niño and La Niña, NWS Damage Surveys, and Forecast Models. Meteorologists in the office teamed up to produce and present workout topics to many of our esteemed EM partners over the course of each 30-minute session. Presentations were recorded and saved to our office webpage for future reference and viewing, essential in maintaining and cultivating our NWS/partner relationships.

In light of the success of the initial Weather Workouts, the TBW WFO decided to organize another round of sessions for the month of July, covering topics ranging from Areal and Flash Flooding, to Hurricanes and Summer Sea Breeze Thunderstorm climatology. Just as in February, these events are scheduled to be held each Tuesday, followed by Q & A sessions to exchange ideas geared toward improving partner relations. For more, see our NWS Tampa Bay Weather Workouts page: <https://www.weather.gov/tbw/workouts>.

## Hurricane Season Outlook and New Normals



By: Jen Hubbard

The forecast for the Atlantic Hurricane Season is for 13-20 named storms to form (winds of 39 mph or greater), 6-10 of those becoming a hurricane (winds of 74 mph or greater), and then 3-5 of those becoming a major hurricane (winds of 111 mph or greater or a Category 3 or higher). There is a 60% chance of an above normal season. And those normals have just been recalculated for the 30 year period 1990-2020, and the new normals are slightly higher, with an average season having 14 named storms, 7 of which becoming hurricanes, and 3 of those becoming major hurricanes.

The above average season is expected due to several factors. First, the El Niño Southern Oscillation is in a neutral phase, and may move into a La Niña phase by the end of the hurricane season, both of which support higher tropical activity. Predicted warmer than average sea surface temperatures in the tropical Atlantic and Caribbean Sea, weaker tropical Atlantic trade winds, and an enhanced west African monsoon will also support the likelihood of a higher than normal hurricane season.

There have been several improvements to modeling systems as well as observation systems, such as with the use of drones, for this season in order to continue improving and enhancing NOAA/NWS hurricane forecasting. Another change for this season is that the use of the Greek alphabet as a secondary list has been discontinued, and a secondary set list of names has been established. For the full list of names that are reused every 6 years (unless one is retired), visit <https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/aboutnames.shtm>.

It is important to remember though, that it only takes one storm to change your life. So it is very important to be prepared. Know your zone, have a plan, and make sure your preparedness kit is in order. Visit [ready.gov](https://www.weather.gov/ready) if you need assistance with any of this.